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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 003940

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STATE PASS AIT/W

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2014

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SUBJECT: PAN-BLUE BEATS EXPECTATIONS AND RETAINS MAJORITY
IN LY

Classified By: AIT Director Douglas Paal, Reason: 1.4 (B/D)

11. (C) The Pan-Blue alliance lost only one seat and retained a majority with 114 of 225 seats, a surprising performance in the December 11 Legislative Yuan (LY) election. Most commercial and internal party polls, as well as analytical assessments (including AIT's) had expected the Pan-Blue alliance to suffer more significant losses, possibly enough to give the rival Pan-Green the majority. Instead, the Pan-Green alliance gained only one seat, bringing it to a total of 101 seats. The Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU) took six seats and the remaining four seats went to independents. Voter turnout reached a record low at 59 percent, seven points below the 2001 LY election and 21 percent lower than the March 20 presidential election. Septel will assess the policy implications of the new LY makeup.

12. (C) Although the overall balance in the LY barely changed in this election, there were significant shifts within both alliances, with the major parties consolidating power at the expense of their junior partners. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) captured 89 seats, a gain of two, and the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) took 12, a loss of one. The biggest winner, however, was the Kuomintang (KMT), which won 79 seats, a gain of eleven, entirely at the expense of the People First Party (PFP), which took 34 seats, down twelve from its previous 46. The New Party (NP) incumbent on Kinmen Island held onto the last Pan-Blue seat.

13. (C) Comment: The KMT's success in this election is the result of KMT restraint and TSU recklessness. The KMT decided to adopt a conservative nomination strategy. It nominated a total of 74 candidates for the district elections this year, down from 101 in 2001. The DPP, by contrast, increased its nominations from 83 in 2001 to 92 this year. It might have been successful in reaching its goals had the TSU not been so aggressive, nominating far more candidates

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than they could reasonably expect to win. Throughout the campaign, DPP officials were confident in their chances because they assumed the TSU would not win a significant share of the vote.

14. However, the last week of the campaign saw a surge in support for the TSU, largely at the expense of the DPP. Most of the TSU candidates who benefited, however were too numerous to get elected, but they often pulled several previously secure DPP candidates under the election threshold with them. It is likely that the DPP might have won as many as six or seven additional seats without this TSU overnomination, pulling the Pan-Green even with the Pan-Blue. The PFP's nomination strategy was actually the most conservative of all the parties, generally aiming only to hold onto its existing seats. Nevertheless, it suffered throughout the election from flagging popularity and many of its supporters in the end returned to the KMT fold.
PAAL